FIVE POINTS FOR PLA PROGRAMS

Important Considerations

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Five Critical Factors

1. Philosophy, Mission, Policies
2. Institutional Support
3. Program Practices
4. Professional Development
5. Program Evaluation

(Travers, 2013; Hoffman, Travers, Evans & Treadwell, 2009)
Point I. Institutional Philosophy & Mission

Philosophy statements
- Does your institution’s philosophy and/or mission statement support PLA?
- Which types of philosophies do you see across your institution?

Policies that support PLA practices
- Does your institution have specific policy on PLA to guide your practice?
- What other policies (e.g., transfer) impact PLA practices?
Every practice has an underlying philosophy
Philosophical Underpinnings

1. Redress
2. Access
3. Lifelong Learning
4. Credentialing
## Redress: Focus on New Knowledge

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<td>• All knowledge (beyond a secondary level) has the potential to be part of higher education.</td>
<td>• Only sanctioned knowledge is part of higher education.</td>
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<td>• PLA allows for an expansion of knowledge in higher education through the student.</td>
<td>• PLA is assessed against standards that reaffirm existing tenets.</td>
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**Policy:** Learning can be assessed regardless of when, where or how it was learned.

**Policy:** Assessed prior learning must match existing curriculum.
# Access: Focus is on Inclusion

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<td>• All people have the potential to learn in higher education.</td>
<td>• Only those people who meet specified criteria are accepted into higher education.</td>
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<td>• PLA is provided through all disciplines and applied towards all degree requirements.</td>
<td>• PLA is restricted to only specific disciplines and/or degree requirements.</td>
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<td>• PLA can be used as admissions criteria and placement within the system.</td>
<td>• PLA is not part of admissions or placement criteria.</td>
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**Policy:** PLA is open to all learners.

**Policy:** PLA is limited by criteria.
### Lifelong Learning: Focus is on Development

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<td>• Higher education is developmental and transformative.</td>
<td>• Higher education is a path to a means.</td>
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<td>• PLA provides opportunities to explore personal, educational and professional goals.</td>
<td>• PLA provides a way to meet degree requirements.</td>
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**Policy:** Students are supported through various resources, workshops, courses and/or advisement.

**Policy:** PLA is used to meet degree requirements.
### Credentialing: Focus is on Goal Obtainment

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| • The purpose of higher education is to acquire credentials, especially for workforce development.  
• PLA provides ways to validate and accredit learning toward credentials.  
• Through PLA, individuals leverage existing knowledge, competencies and skills to move into or progress within a field. | • Higher education is to acquire credentials; restricted to formally recognized knowledge.  
• PLA is constrained to prior knowledge measured through standardized means (e.g., CLEP) and/or applied only to noncore elements of the credential (e.g., electives). |

**Policy:** PLA is connected to and built into degree and career pathways.  
**Policy:** PLA is restricted to selected disciplines or through limited means.
Point II. Institutional Support/Infrastructure

- Financial Support
- Administrative Support
- Faculty Buy-In
- Program Administration
- Technology
- Marketing
Point III. Program Practices

- How is integrity of the process maintained?
- How is equality ensured?
- How can students use PLA credits?
- How are the credits approved and managed?
Point IV. Professional Development

- Administration
- PLA Program Director/Staff
- Faculty
- Student Support Services (Admissions/Recruitment, Registrar, FA, Bursar, Learning Center)
- Institutional Support Services (Marketing, IT)
Point V. Program Improvement

- How do you maintain consistency and academic quality across your PLA options?
- How do you evaluate your PLA program?
- What data can you collect?
- What areas of your prior learning assessment program do you want to improve or expand?
DISCUSSION